

Message

From: Joan Mell [joan@3brancheslaw.com]
Sent: 3/28/2014 10:02:32 PM
To: Lowell Clark [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ef67fd9964c441048c81e634da7eb1c8-Lowell Clar]; Shihpei Stevenson [sstevenson@geogroup.com]
Subject: Fwd: Request for L & I Investigation of Detention Center

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Jenkins, Rep. Laurie" <Laurie.Jenkins@leg.wa.gov>
Date: March 28, 2014 at 12:32:59 PM PDT
To: "joan@3brancheslaw.com" <joan@3brancheslaw.com>
Subject: FW: Request for L & I Investigation of Detention Center

Hi Joan,

Rep. Jenkins asked that I reach out to you in regards to a request we received from a constituent (below). The constituent is concerned with the working conditions at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. Laurie said you worked for the detention center, and may be able to give us some back ground on what's legally required there.

Thanks,

Lynda Foster
Legislative Assistant to
Rep. Laurie Jenkins, 27th LD
District office: (253) 566-5610
Olympia office: (360) 786-7930

From: Jolinda Stephens [<mailto:jolindast@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 11:44 AM
To: Jenkins, Rep. Laurie
Subject: Request for L & I Investigation of Detention Center

Dear Rep. Jenkins

Those of us who are supporting the strikers are requesting that you contact the Governor to call for a L&I investigation of the working conditions for detainees at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma.

Those on a hunger strike at the facility are functioning as brave whistle blowers, drawing attention to working and living conditions for those detained within the facility. It is a privately-owned facility with which the federal government contracts to hold people who are under investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to determine whether or not they will be deported.

The facility owned and operated by a private corporation is subject to local and state laws. For instance, their kitchen facilities are inspected by Pierce County. Among other abuses those

leaders of the hunger strike have reported labor abuses. Chief among them is the fact that their labor is compensated at the rate of **\$1 per day**, lower than sweat shop compensation. We have not been able to talk freely with the strikers to obtain further details and we believe that the \$1 per day compensation and the retaliation by Geo against the strikers are red flags that indicate the need for a state investigation into unsafe working conditions.

While Geo maintains that this is voluntary labor, the food they provide is inadequate and the Geo-operated commissary is expensive. To meet their dietary needs work is essential for those detained. Geo profits from their labor. Those being held provide most of the labor to run the facility. The government compensation to Geo has risen substantially over the years but the compensation for their involuntary labor remains the same.

The legal status of those detained is very different from those held in prison serving time for crimes of which they have been convicted. These are people, our neighbors, our co-workers, who are being held while an investigation is conducted as to whether or not a civil action (deportation) will be taken or if they will be given the right to remain in this country. Their welfare is our responsibility. Everyone has a right to safe working conditions and to be free from labor exploitation.

Please write a letter to the Governor urging an L&I investigation of the working conditions for people in this Tacoma business.;

Sincerely
Jolinda
Jolinda Stephens
jolindast@gmail.com
1409 S. Washington St
Tacoma, WA 98405
614-915-079

we came whirling
out of nothingness
scattering stars
like dust

the stars made a circle
and in the middle
we dance

Jalal ad-Din Rumi